

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

## YOUTH EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

# Gathering preps teens for ministry



The 2014 Youth Evangelism Challenge Dec. 29-30 in A.E. Wood Coliseum on the campus of Mississippi College in Clinton, sponsored by the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), met its annual goal of preparing Mississippi Baptist teens from around the state to return home and win their friends and schoolmates for Christ, according to Dom Lum, event coordinator and MBCB director of evangelism. Speakers included Dan Lanier, senior-pastor of Northcrest Church in Meridian, and evangelist Ed Newton from Orlando, Fl. Worship through music was provided by the Cassidy Crenshaw Band of New Orleans, and illusionist Drew Worsham from Pullman, Wa., also performed. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes and First Priority ministry of Hattiesburg were on hand to provide resources to help students reach their school campuses for Christ. The 2015 Youth Evangelism Challenge will take place Dec. 28-29 in A.E. Wood Coliseum at Mississippi College. (Photos by William H. Perkins Jr.)

## IMB'ers in France to continue their mission

**PARIS (BP)** — International Mission Board (IMB) workers in France pray that the Jan. 7 attack in Paris by Muslim extremists will not result in a greater divide between secularism and people of faith.

"The journalists who lost their lives have now become martyrs for the freedom of the press and the freedom of speech," said Tara Chaney, an IMB worker living in France. "We are praying that the outcry against these heinous acts committed by religious extremists will not become outcries against anyone who claims to have any sort of religious belief."

According to Mark Stone, a church planter in Southern France, the polarization of French politics can be traced almost entirely to immigration issues and racial and religious fear.

**"France needs to mourn. France needs healing. France needs compassion. France needs Christ."**

**Mark Stone**

**church planter in Southern France**

"There exists today a delicate tension in France that teeters toward breaking, and [Wednesday's] tragic events will likely serve to further stir up the tension," he said.

This act of terrorism is the worst in France in 50 years, leaving 12 dead and three critically wounded at the offices of the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo. The weekly is known for running pieces critical of Muslim prophets, Islamic State and terrorism, a practice that has resulted in

protests and death threats from Muslim extremists for years.

Last night (Jan. 7), more than 15,000 people filled the streets of Paris carrying signs saying "Je suis Charlie" — I am Charlie — an act that indicates the strong solidarity the public feels with their fallen countrymen. Today is a national day of mourning, and flags will be flown at half-mast for three days.

"I wish I could be there to mourn with them," said Stone, who is currently out of the country.

Stone said he doesn't believe this terrorist act will trigger an increased risk for missionaries. "I don't really see it that way. This was a targeted attack that had nothing to do with us."

"Implications for backlash and a stronger divide between secularism and all religion as well as racial tension are my main concerns following this horrific event."

Chaney said, "Right now, we are praying that the people of France will turn toward God and not away from Him." Stone noted, "France needs to mourn. France needs healing. France needs compassion. France needs Christ."

To learn more about the spiritual needs in France, visit [imb.org/france](http://imb.org/france).

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### Watch out for Christians!

A few years ago, the administrators at Burlington Township High School in New Jersey decided to hold a special emergency drill to deal with the real-world possibility that gunmen could take over the school and hold hostages — or worse. Given the state of our society today and many actual events like the Columbine High School massacre in Colorado and the Sandy Hook school shooting in Connecticut, holding such an exercise is probably a practical thing to do.

"You perform as you practice," Superintendent Chris Manno told the Burlington County Times newspaper when he announced the drill. "We need to practice under conditions as real as possible in order to evaluate our procedures and plans so that they're as effective as possible." So far, so good.

The drill began with two Burlington Township police detectives playing the roles of gunmen. They burst into the school and "shot" students before holing up in a classroom with ten pretend student hostages.

What was the gunmen's scripted grievance against the school? The newspaper reported that they were cast as members of a right-wing fundamentalist group known as the New Crusaders who don't believe in separation of church and state, and one of their daughters had been expelled from school for praying before class.

That's right — of all the deadly threats schools encounter daily and all the terrorist groups intent on inflicting mass casualties on the U.S., school officials in Burlington Township chose right-wing fundamentalist Christians and their obsession with school prayer to be the bad guys in this training scenario.

Such is the sorry state of affairs in our country today, when Christians can be painted as "New Crusaders" intent on inflicting death and destruction over school prayer — and concocting such a slander against Christians can apparently be accomplished with impunity.

That's not to say that there aren't far-out groups who create

mayhem while illegitimately claiming to do so on behalf of Jesus. That's not to say the 2000-year history of Christianity is without blemish. It is to say that Christians are plainly not the central threat to our way of life today.

It is also to say — obviously enough — that the ever-growing practice of political correctness in the country forbids using the names and beliefs of the groups that truly threaten our way of life. Thus do terrorists who slaughter women and children become courageous "freedom fighters," while Christians become evil "New Crusaders," and the terrorists are noble while Christians are diabolical.

There is a method to this semantical madness, and it's this: Christians must be discredited as a legitimate force for good if the armies of secularism are to be victorious. That's not a vague philosophical concept to be debated among learned men and women. That's not the paranoid ramblings of the "New Crusaders."

There may be no central clearinghouse for discrediting Christianity, and there may not be an organized nationwide effort to debase our belief system, but it certainly happens on an ad hoc basis and is then parroted by others like school officials planning disaster drills.

Who else stands up for the worth of individuals, the sanctity of human life, the integrity of marriage between one man and one woman, and so many other issues crucial to the future of our civilization? What other group creates such anxiety among the secularists who want to have their way, who want to be able to live their lives with no moral compass and no spiritual anchor?

That's why school officials, Hollywood producers, politicians, and so many others try so hard to devalue Christianity. One particularly effective way to do that is to make us appear to be homicidal nuts in make-believe disaster drills. To at least one school district in New Jersey, that's practicing "under conditions as real as possible."

Chilling, isn't it?

## God's voice, all around us

Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. (Psalm 19:2-4)

Nature. That is what this verse is talking about. Being out in nature.

I recently read an article in The Guardian, that said, "... Ask anyone over 40 to recount their most treasured memories of childhood play, and few will be indoors. Fewer still will involve an adult. Independent play, outdoors and far from grown-up eyes, is what we remember. As things stand, today's children will be unlikely to treasure memories like that: 21% of today's kids regularly play outside, compared with 71% of their parents."

As I read that, I thought back to my own childhood and my mind was flooded with memories of being down at the creek behind our house catching minnows, playing baseball with friends down the street, riding my bike with my brother around the block, and running all alone through the woods near our house.

Most of us tend to feel something invigorating when we are out in nature. I think these verses explain why we feel that way. The verbs in these verses keep popping off the page at me: "pour" and "reveal."

The definition of pour is to "flow rapidly in a steady stream." (dictionary.com). I began to think about rain or a waterfall. Those are both natural examples of water pouring out. It would be extremely difficult to stop a natural waterfall from running and it is completely impossible to stop the pouring of rain.

As I meditated on this Scripture, I began to think about God's speech pouring out from creation. It is impossible for anyone to stop God's voice from shouting out of creation. His handiwork naturally shouts His name. His creation is pouring out speech to us and much like the downpour of rain, it is impossible to stop His voice from saying through His earth, "Here I am! Here I am! Look at me. I am pouring myself out to you."

The online Webster dictionary defines the word, reveal, as, "1. To make known through divine inspiration or 2. To make something that is secret or hidden publicly or generally known."



Guest opinion  
with Lauren Osborne

The night sky, through divine inspiration, makes publicly known to us the mystery of God. The night sky reveals knowledge. Night after night, God provides anticipation and excitement of what is to come by what He has placed in the heavens for us to see. The stars, their order, their vast numbers, their changing positions, and their abilities, all reveal the knowledge of our God.

Creation is a universal language. There is no one in the world, no place in the world, and no language spoken in any tribe or land that can misunderstand the language of creation. God created a world that allows all people of every nation and tribe to understand that there is a creator and he is called God Almighty.

His name is clearly written all over the earth. We can choose to stay out of church, we can stop listening to our pastors, we can quit listening to Christian music, and choose to stop hanging out with our godly friends, but still we cannot escape God's sweet voice. The voice of creation sings sweetly to the ends of the earth.

Our children are losing the opportunity to hear God's creation pour out speech to them and they are losing the ability to sense the knowledge of Him night after night. We must allow our children time outside to experience what God's hands have made, for this is good for their whole being — mind, body, and spirit!

Lord, let us all spend more time in Your handiwork with our spouses, with our grandparents, and with our children, so that you can pour your speech over us and reveal your knowledge to us. Amen!

Osborne lives in Hurst, Texas, and is an active speaker for women's events, parenting classes, and school districts. She is the co-founder of You Are My Treasure and blogs at hisfinestwhispers.blogspot.com.

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# Fire chief's employment terminated over book

**ATLANTA (BP and local reports) —** Former Atlanta fire chief Kelvin Cochran is "pretty confident" he will take legal action after being fired for his publication of a book that calls homosexual behavior immoral and the mayor's refusal of his request for a face-to-face meeting.

"I believe there is objective evidence that should have exonerated me," Cochran told Baptist Press (BP) in a Jan. 9 interview. "It's on that basis that I believe I have been treated unjustly."

Cochran was terminated Jan. 6 by Atlanta mayor Kasim Reed following an investigation into his self-published book, *Who Told You That You Are Naked?* In November, Cochran was suspended without pay for a month and ordered to undergo sensitivity training.

Cochran is a deacon, Sunday School teacher, and Bible study leader at Atlanta's Elizabeth Church, a cooperating church of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

A two-time Atlanta fire chief, Cochran also served as U.S. Fire Administrator under U.S. President Barack Obama from 2009-10.

Cochran's 162-page book seeks to help Christian men overcome feelings of guilt and condemnation over past sins. It discusses homosexuality for less than half a page, including a mention of uncleanness as the "opposite of purity; including sodomy, homosexuality, lesbianism, pederasty, bestiality, and all other forms of sexual perversion."

An employee of the fire department to whom Cochran did not give a copy of the book obtained a copy, delivered it to an openly homosexual city council member, and highlighted the passages referencing homosexuality, Cochran said.

The council member, whom Fox News identified as Alex Wan, showed the book to Reed and members of Atlanta's LGBT community.

Cochran said he did not previously

"Each person that was interviewed in the investigation was asked, did they think that my spiritual beliefs actually influenced the culture and way in which I managed the department, and all of them said yes. I think that's a testimony to my walk with God that all of them confirmed, because I have intentionally and deliberately tried to be a servant leader."

**Kelvin Cochran**

**former Atlanta fire chief**



**REED**

sense hostility from the individual who delivered his book to Wan.

Scripture has strengthened Cochran since his termination, he said, particularly Psalm 27, which he has recited daily for eight years along with Psalm 112 and Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

"Sometimes you get into a routine like that, and it becomes just that — a routine," Cochran said. "You just forget what you're saying and you keep on doing it. Well, having gone through this experience, now when I go through those Scriptures, it dawns on me that there are specific portions of those Scriptures that completely minister to me in this situation."

In Psalm 27, King David spoke of "adversaries," "foes," and "false witnesses" who came against him but concluded, "I am certain that I will see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and courageous. Wait for the Lord."

In a Jan. 6 meeting with Atlanta's chief operating officer, Cochran was told he could resign or be fired, he told BP. When he refused to resign, believing the charges against him were unfounded, he was terminated.

Cochran said his dismissal was based on three charges: failing to obtain proper permission to write his book, distributing the book at work inappropriately, and writing in the book that he sought to glorify God through the fire department.

Reed, who was not present at the meeting and did not accept Cochran's request for a personal meeting, said at a press conference that Cochran's deci-

sion to make public comments during the investigation into his conduct contributed to the termination.

The city's investigation exonerated Cochran of charges that he discriminated against homosexuals, the former chief said, adding that there has never been a discrimination complaint filed against him.

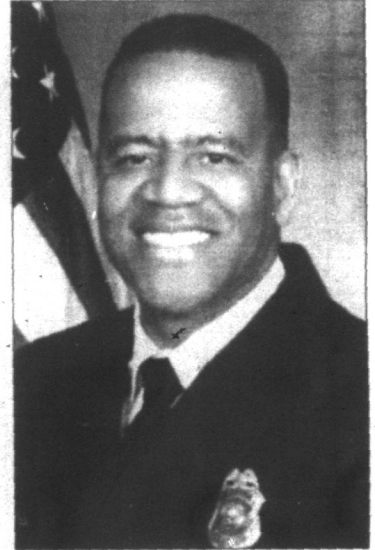
"The love of a Christian is a love without condition for all people," Cochran said, "and just because we don't agree with their beliefs about sexuality does not equate to hate or discrimination."

Regarding the other allegations, Cochran said he obtained permission to write the book from Atlanta's ethics officer Nina Hickson, but Hickson told investigators "she couldn't remember the conversation."

Cochran admitted giving copies of the book to three fire department employees who did not ask for the copies, but he said he had established relationships with them as fellow Christians and he did not exceed the city's \$25 limit on gifts to coworkers.

He said he was not aware of a policy precluding gifts that are religious in nature. Cochran said he was also told that writing about his intention to glorify God through the fire department violated city policy, though no specific policy was cited.

"Each person that was interviewed in the investigation was asked, did they think that my spiritual beliefs actually influenced the culture and way in which I managed the department, and all of them said yes," Cochran pointed out.



**COCHRAN**

"I think that's a testimony to my walk with God that all of them confirmed, because I have intentionally and deliberately tried to be a servant leader."

Cochran said his superiors have never complained about his job performance or competency. He acknowledged, however, that as a political appointee he served at the pleasure of the mayor and could be terminated under any circumstance.

However, he believes he was treated unethically because the stated basis for his firing was unsubstantiated.

Cochran says he still trusts in God's sovereign care. "I don't think that anything has happened in my life that God has not permitted to happen," he said, citing Romans 8:28. "I completely trust God to order my steps for the next assignment that He has for me in my life."

Cochran can be contacted by emailing [kelvin.cochran@yahoo.com](mailto:kelvin.cochran@yahoo.com). His book is also available for purchase by writing to that e-mail address.

## Olympic committee OKs sexual orientation as protected class

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Olympic Charter shall be secured without discrimination of any kind, such as race, color, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political, or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status."

**Fundamental Principles of Olympism**

**MONACO (BP) —** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has added sexual orientation to the Olympic Charter. The decision comes after pressure from homosexual advocacy groups following Russia's prohibition of "gay propaganda" during the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

The change, part of a 40-point reform package pushed by IOC President Thomas Bach, passed by a unanimous 96-0 vote by the international committee Dec. 8 in Monaco.

The IOC reworded a clause in one of its Fundamental Principles of Olympism to state: "The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Olympic Charter shall be secured without discrimination of any

kind, such as race, color, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political, or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status."

Countries hoping to host the games must abide by the Olympic Charter. Opponents of the change say the new standard will mean countries bidding for the Olympics will be required to have pro-homosexual laws in place. This may affect bids from the two finalists for the 2022 Winter Games: Almaty, Kazakhstan, and Beijing, China.

The United States Olympic Committee has decided to make a bid for the 2024 Summer Games, recommending Boston as the host city.

While the long-term effect is still unknown, the IOC vote did

not come as much of a surprise.

"I would expect the international sports community to go down this road," said Tim Pitcher, spokesman for the Christian organization Athletes in Action.

Asked whether Olympic athletes could face discrimination for their beliefs, Pitcher said Christian Olympians have to walk a fine line. They must figure out how to appropriately live out and share their Christian faith, he said, while abiding by their league's guidelines.

Many think pressure to accept transgendered individuals is the next step for the IOC, an issue Pitcher calls "Pandora's box."

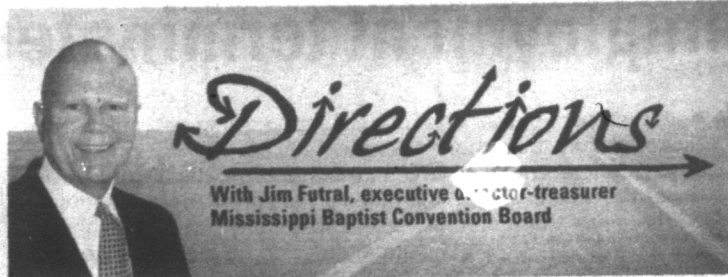
Numerous homosexual rights organizations celebrated the IOC decision to

embrace sexual orientation. Hudson Taylor, executive director of Athlete Ally, said after the IOC vote, "There is no greater sign of progress in combating homophobia in sports than to have the oldest organized athletic competition in the history of the world saying enough is enough."

IOC member Barry Maister from New Zealand asked how the IOC would enforce the new principle, said he had no idea "but I think the IOC often does things it can't enforce yet can take a leadership role with," Maister told the Chicago Tribune. "It can articulate and advocate and push for change regardless of the implementation of it. It's the logical thing to do in today's world."

**I**t was back during the Christmas season when parking lots were full and people were in a hurry that I came upon a situation and I wanted to help, but as it unfolded I just stepped back and let other folks do what they could. Here is the scene. A lady was leaving the parking lot, but she drove over one of those concrete strips that you see in parking lots when you pull into a parking spot and it keeps you from going any further. Well, this one was in kind of a strange place in the parking lot and the lady had driven over it, but once her car went over, it got stuck on it and could not go any further. She could not go forward and she could not go backward. It was just hung! Now I was going over to her and the other lady that was in the car with her to try to see if I could help, when a man in a pickup drove up to the scene and he was obviously on a mission. I assumed that it was her husband because the fellow started to explain to the lady that she was not supposed to drive over the concrete barrier. I think that she had already figured that out before he arrived. I also realized that I did not need to be a part of that discussion, but I wanted to explain to the lady that the situation she was in was so much like life – you come to a bump in life and you get over it only to find out that you have to get over another one.

Some days and in some ways it just seems as though life is filled with bumps, double bumps, triple bumps, and quadruple bumps. Sometimes it looks like all of life is just one bump after another. The Apostle Paul seems to have felt that way when the Lord had him writing II Corinthians 4:8-9. While he talks about life being difficult, it is



## The Double Bumps of Life

encouraging to know that this great spiritual giant of the New Testament also had the kind of tests, trials, and troubles like we do. I think that Paul would have all of his readers and every one of us to understand that no one is immune from the difficulties of life. Now while you may know that you are not immune, you probably think that there are some people that just never have any bumps or double bumps in life. May I assure you that you are absolutely wrong.

It does not matter if you are talking about the super saints of life or the ragtag variety of sainthood like most of us are. You are still going to have trials and troubles, pains and traumas that are a part of our human existence. The great patient saint Job said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). I do not believe that Job was just complaining or whining, I think that he was just stating the absolute reality of most of our lives. Troubles, trials, and the tests of life as

you move forward are just a natural part of our existence.

So often I think of the little boy who was struggling and trying to learn to tie his shoes. He was a preschooler and his mom was trying to get him to learn to tie his shoes before he started to school. He worked, struggled, twisted, and turned the laces until finally at last he had success. He tied his shoes by himself for the very first time. His mother who was watching this take place said, "That is wonderful! I am so proud of you." The little boy looked up and started crying. She said, "Son, why are you crying?" He looked up at his mom and said, "Because for the rest of my life I am going to have to tie my shoes all by myself."

Beyond reminding us that all of us are going to have problems in life, the Apostle Paul interjects that in the midst of all of that we can have the strength of God and we can be victorious. Amazingly, God takes the lessons we learn from getting over one bump and then another

and another and incorporates them into our life so that we will be stronger and more capable as we deal with the next bump of life. The great Apostle Peter is probably best known for either sinking after walking on the water or for denying Jesus in the last hours of His life. You know it is an interesting thing, although I have never heard a sermon on it and rarely have I had anybody even mention it, and most of us do not even think about it, but the reality is that neither one of those things ever happened again. Not another time in Scripture or in history did Simon Peter ever deny his Lord.

I sometimes wonder if Peter might have had a discussion with the Gospel writers and asked them, "Guys, why did you put that in there?" I wonder if he might not have asked them if they could just put one sentence in there saying, "But he never, ever did that again." For him, failure was not final and neither does it have to be that way for you. In short order, the man who came to help the lady got the car off of the bump. I was not standing around to watch it happen and do not know exactly what he did but in just a little while he was gone and the lady was free to be on her way too.

Maybe there are some big obstacles that you have stumbled over or driven over lately and you are kind of hung up on the bumps in your life. The Lord will help you and you can get up, get moving, and continue in life if you will. The Lord will not leave you stranded. He will free you and lead you forward. Just remember regardless of how many bumps you may be experiencing in your life, His grace is sufficient to bring you over every one of them.

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# World remains dangerous place for Christianity

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — While North Korea held its spot for the 13th consecutive year as the most dangerous country for Christians to live, a new report noted other countries are experiencing unprecedented levels of persecution.

Open Doors, which seeks to strengthen the persecuted church overseas, released its annual World Watch List on Jan. 7. The list ranks the top 50 countries where it is most dangerous and difficult to be a Christian. The top 10 ranked in descending order were:

- North Korea.
- Somalia.
- Iraq.
- Syria.
- Afghanistan.
- Sudan.
- Iran.
- Pakistan.
- Eritrea.
- Nigeria.

This year Open Doors reported the "threshold was higher for a country to make the list," indicating increased levels of worldwide persecution.

Open Doors USA President David Curry said, "Even Christian-majority states are experiencing unprecedented levels of exclusion, discrimination, and violence. The 2015 World Watch List reveals that a staggering number of Christians are becoming victims of intolerance and violence because of their faith. They are being forced to be more secretive about their faith."

While persecution can take many forms, Christians throughout the world risk imprisonment, torture, rape, and death as result of their faith, Open Doors said. Approximately 100 million Christians are persecuted worldwide, making them one of the most persecuted religious groups in the world, according to the report.

An estimated 70,000 Christians in North Korea remain

in prison for their faith, the report said. Conditions appear to be worsening for Christians throughout Asia. Countries such as Uzbekistan (15), Vietnam (16) and India (21) have all seen increases in persecution.

Islamic extremism is the main source of persecution in 40 of the 50 countries on the 2015 World Watch List, Open Doors reported.

The Middle East remains one of the most violent areas of the world for Christians, and violence against Christians by the ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) terrorist group increased in Iraq and Syria, the report said.

More than 70% of resident Christians have fled Iraq since 2003, and more than 700,000 resident Christians have left Syria since the civil war began in 2011. The report also noted Afghanistan and Pakistan have both increased in persecution.

Africa saw the most rapid growth of persecution, the report said. For the third year in a row, the majority of African nations on the World Watch List have increased in rank due to Islamic extremism, the report said. Kenya jumped from No. 43 to No. 19 on the list.

Curry said the goal of the World Watch List, which was first compiled in 1991, is to "keep Christian persecution on the radar of those enjoying the privileges of freedom."

"The perpetrators of persecution need to know that the world is watching and stands in opposition to persecution," he said, "and for the persecuted, we want them to know that they are not forgotten."

Christian persecution is defined as any hostility experienced as a result of one's identification with Christ, the report said. Recent examples include imprisonment, torture, beatings, rape, and loss of home and assets.



**ANOTHER TOWN FALLS** — A grainy screen capture from cell-phone video footage shows Islamic extremists belonging to the Boko Haram group overtaking the town of Gwoza, Nigeria, where the group says they have established an "Islamic Caliphate." The terrorists overtake towns by trickery and force, confusing residents by wearing Nigerian military uniforms and executing men, women, and children as they go. (BP photo)

## 'No longer Nigeria's war,' warns expert on country

**BAGA, Nigeria (BP and local reports)** — Boko Haram's slaughter of 2,000 northeastern Nigerians shows the Islamic jihadists have escalated beyond targeting Christians and has placed Nigeria in the midst of a global war against humanity, Nigerian relations expert Adeniyi Ojutiku told Baptist Press today on Jan. 12.

While the Charlie Hebdo magazine assassinations in Paris have captured the world's attention, hundreds of gunmen invaded Baga and 16 surrounding villages in Nigeria's Borno state beginning Jan. 3, and continued to slaughter residents and burn homes throughout the following week, killing an estimated 2,000 residents.

Amnesty International described the attack as Boko Haram's deadliest to date.

Boko Haram is an international offensive, Ojutiku said, comparable to ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). "This is no longer Nigeria's war," he said. "Whatever the global community is doing with respect to ISIS... they should be doing the same thing with respect to Boko Haram."

The terrorists, who first targeted Christians in an effort to establish Islamic Sharia law in Nigeria, can no longer be considered a problem for Nigeria and Christians only, he said. "This is an escalation of the global Islamic agenda and they have support — heavy support, training, equipment, material, from radical Islamic organizations."

"The local terrorism has been internationalized. The crisis has escalated beyond just killing Christians. ...Now there is evidence that this very radical Islamic sect is now devouring their own moderate Muslims."

"Initially, yes, Christians, but now they are more indiscriminate."

Nigeria alone cannot be expected to defeat Boko Haram, said Ojutiku, a Southern Baptist in Raleigh, N.C., who has founded Lift Up Now, a grassroots outreach to reform his homeland economically and spiritually.

"Nigeria is fighting a global ideological war. They are also fighting well-trained, formidable forces of anti-civilization. So, there is the ideological war that has been globalized, and Nigeria has been drawn into it," he said. "If the global community just expects Nigeria to defeat Boko Haram by itself, it's not going to happen because it's now a global affair."

Eye witnesses to the January attacks said the terrorists killed citizens as though the victims were "insects," Nigeria's Premium Times newspaper reported Jan. 12 in accounts drawn from survivors.

"We saw dead bodies especially, on the islands of Lake Chad where fishermen had settled," the newspaper quoted Yahaya Takakumi, a 55-year-old farmer. "Several persons were killed there like insects."

Ibrahim Gambo, a 25-year-old truck driver who survived the slaughter, reported horrendous scenes to the Premium Times. "We came across many dead bodies, some in groups and others by themselves in the bush," Gambo said. "I saw dead children and women, and even a pregnant woman with her stomach slit open."

The death toll ranges from hundreds to 2,000, but Nigerian

officials have said it's still too dangerous to count the bodies.

"Dead bodies litter the bushes in the area and it is still not safe to go and pick them [up] for burial," CNN quoted Musa Bakar, chairman of the Baga local government. "Some people who hid in their homes were burned alive."

At least 30,000 people were displaced, perhaps 20,000 of them camping in Maiduguri city, the capital of Borno state. Officials are planning to transport some 10,000 others from Monguno town, about 36 miles from Baga, CNN reported.

Satellite imagery should be used to discern a more accurate death toll, Ojutiku told Baptist Press. "We should have satellite imagery of the carnage, human carnage, and also of the destruction. This imagery needs to be broadcast to the world, so that there is no dispute."

Boko Haram continued its assault Jan. 12, attacking a military base in the northwest Cameroonian city of Kolofata, an area where many of the displaced citizens had fled, Al Jazeera reported.

However, reports could not be verified that Cameroon soldiers had killed between 200-300 Boko Haram soldiers in the attack and captured much of their equipment, Al Jazeera reported. Residents fled the city as soon as gunfire erupted, the news agency reported.

The insurgents now control about 20,000 square miles in northeastern Nigeria. Within the past five years, Boko Haram has killed thousands in Nigeria, many of them Christians, and has displaced hundreds of thousands, various watch groups have reported.



## Just for the Record



**GRIFFITH MEMORIAL CHURCH, JACKSON**, recently dedicated its new playground in memory of D'Alice Lendingham, who was the church's ministry assistant for 53 years. Shown are pastor Andy Fullington and Karson Welch.



**CENTER HILL CHURCH, HAMILTON**, planned a movie night at the Elkin Theater, Aberdeen, for the children's Christmas fellowship. Terry Edwards, pastor.



Children from **PROGRESS CHURCH, MCCOMB**, presented a Christmas program. Shown are Braxten Waskem, Jaxson Steele, Mason Steele, Caleb Rushing, and Autumn Rushing; front, Raylee Waskem.



The Kids Klub of **SILVER CREEK CHURCH, MCCOMB**, presented An Out of the Box Christmas Pageant.



**PLEASANT RIDGE CHURCH, WOODLAND**, presented the Christmas story and fellowship with Grayson Hendon, Avery Hendon, Lizzie Kinard, Elizabeth Del-Castillo, and Tyler Washington, with decorations by Clint Washington & family.



The Central Sensational Singers Children's Choir of **CENTRAL CHURCH, MERIDIAN**, presented Fact or Fiction: The Christmas Musical Dec. 14.



The Mary Sunday School class of **MAGNOLIA CHURCH, LAUREL**, filled and delivered fruit baskets to the homebound during Christmas.



Pastor Clarence Edwards, **FIRST CHURCH, BOYLE**, baptized brothers Alex Hamilton and Caden Faurote Dec. 21.



**DEKALB CHURCH, KEMPER COUNTY**, ordained Sanford (Rusty) Ryals Oct. 26, 2014. Shown are Mildred Ryals, Ryals, and pastor James Ruffin.



## College News

► The Center for Creative Scholars at **William Carey University** will host the full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead! Creativity Exploration Camp at the Tradition campus in Biloxi Jan. 17, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. and at the Thomas Business Building on the Hattiesburg campus 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Jan. 24. The camp is for students in grades 2 - 6 and is designed to help them explore their creative potential through science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics. Cost, \$20. For more info or to receive nomination materials, contact assistant professor of education Christina Liverett at (601) 318-6609 or at [cliverett@wmcarey.edu](mailto:cliverett@wmcarey.edu).

## Just for the Record



**FIRST CHURCH, INVERNESS**, ordained Will Riddick as deacon Dec. 28. Shown, from left, are Erin Riddick, son Ben, Riddick, son Graham, and pastor Bryan Burge.



**NEW PROSPECT CHURCH, OLIVE BRANCH**, recently ordained three deacons. Shown are Jeremy Herring, Lee Parish, Pat Vaiden, and senior pastor Bob Curtis.



### Steve Roark

member of the American Association Of Christian COUNSELORS and in the referral network for Focus on the Family

- 3 one-hour sessions
- Topics include spiritual leadership, conflict resolution, personality types, realistic expectations and commitment.
- I have been married for 37 years

[steve.roark56@gmail.com](mailto:steve.roark56@gmail.com)  
662-571-7803



The R.A.'s and G.A.'s of **FLOWOOD CHURCH, FLOWOOD**, made crafts and goodies for the Christmas store. These items were sold to raise money for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.



Members of **GRACE CHURCH, LEXINGTON**, are shown at the church's annex Dec. 21 when the facility was used for the first time. The annex will be used for classrooms and fellowship hall.



Available now at  
[Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

## In other Church News:

► **North Columbia Church, Columbia**, will host Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Ave. Church, New Orleans, and past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, for the first of their Magnificent Monday Meetings Feb. 2, 6:30 p.m. Love offering.

**THE BaptistRecord**



Children and their adult leader from **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, are shown with their Lottie Moon Post Office exchanging Christmas cards, raising money for Lottie Moon missions.

Don't forget to register for your

## free Estate Planning Phone Seminar

January 22, 10 a.m. or 7 p.m. | January 29, 10 a.m. or 3 p.m.

Information presented toll-free by **Philanthropy Corp.** in association with your **Mississippi Baptist Foundation**. To register call 601.292.3210 or email [FOUNDATION@MBCB.ORG](mailto:FOUNDATION@MBCB.ORG)

# Three-state appeal of marriage rulings heard at Fifth Circuit

**NEW ORLEANS (BP)** — The U.S. Court of Appeals 5th Circuit on Jan. 9 heard challenges to marriage laws in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

The similarity between the contested laws — defining marriage as a union only between a man and a woman and the prohibition against recognizing same-sex marriages performed in other states — led the appellate court to consider the cases together. Each case was heard separately, but a common thread of questioning wove its way through the hearings.

"The laws that are at issue are naturally the same, and the 14th Amendment challenges to these laws are identical," Justin Matheny, attorney for the State of Mississippi, told the court in his opening arguments. "The question is, 'Does the 14th Amendment prohibit the state from defining marriage as between a man and a woman?'"

Attorneys for the plaintiffs, who are same-sex couples seeking to be married or have their out-of-state marriages recognized in the three states, argued the same amendment protects homosexuals as a "suspect class" of citizen, countering the state's ability to discriminate against them in matters of marriage law.

Homosexual and lesbian couples contend there is no distinction between same-sex and opposite-sex marriage relationships, but Jonathan Mitchell, Texas solicitor general, called that a "value judgment" not rising to the level of equal protection.

"Equal protection of the laws does not require a state to confer equal treatment on things that are different," he said, noting the differences in the contested marriage relationships are rooted in biological reality. The 14th Amendment does not say that states must convey equal treatment on whatever federal judges think should be treated equally."

Spectators lined up outside the New Orleans court house before proceedings began, vying for a seat in the chamber. Overflow seating with a remote audio feed from the courtroom was established to accommodate the anticipated large media and public interest in the case.

Judges Patrick Higginbotham and Jerry Smith, both nominees of U.S. President Ronald Reagan, and James Graves, a nominee of U.S. President Barack Obama, were seated to hear Campaign for Southern Equality v. Phil Brya (Miss.), Robecheaux v. Caldwell (La.), and De Leon v. Perry (Tex.).

Graves is a former associate justice on the Mississippi Supreme Court.

Attorneys for the states argued legal precedent gives states the authority to define marriage, repeatedly citing Baker v. Nelson, the 1971 Minnesota Supreme Court ruling denying homosexual couples had a right to marry. A year later the U.S. Supreme Court upheld that case and the ruling still stands.

Plaintiffs' attorneys argued state sodomy laws prejudiced jurists against homosexuals seeking marriage licenses 42 years ago, and time, public opinion, and the trajectory of court decisions affirming a fundamental right of marriage annuls Baker v. Nelson.

"It was a different world, and it's changed now," Daniel Lane, attorney for the Texas plaintiffs in De Leon v. Perry, told the judges.

Higginbotham disagreed. "No. There has been no other Supreme Court case even nearly on point on that specific question, which was whether it's constitutional for a state to limit marriages to heterosexual couples. The court will let us know when it's changed its mind," he told Lane.

Higginbotham often queried attorneys about the state's authority to define marriage.

Attorneys on both sides frequently cited the 2013 decision in United States v. Windsor to advance their case. The New York lawsuit challenged Section 3 of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, which stated the federal government would only recognize marriages between a man and a woman.

The provision was struck down, and that ruling was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

States' attorneys argued the Supreme Court decision did not define marriage and left that prerogative to the states.

Although plaintiffs' attorneys did not dispute that fact, Roberta Kaplan, attorney for the Mississippi plaintiffs, said, "The logic of Windsor says that gay people have a dignity that's equal to everyone else. Once you accept that gay people are equal to everyone else, then all these reasons make no sense."

Promoting procreation and the raising of children within marriage were the salient arguments presented by states' attorneys. Laws and benefits proffered by the state are often inherently discriminatory, Mitchell said. Legal precedent allows for the imperfection of laws as a means to an end that advances state interests; in this circumstance the raising of children by their biological mother and father which research indicates is the best environment for producing healthy productive children.

## Staff Changes



**EAST PHILADELPHIA CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA**, has called Keith Ramage as pastor. His first Sunday was Jan. 4.



Kenneth E. Walters, Hattiesburg, has recently retired after 55 years of pastoring churches across Mississippi and Kentucky. **HICKORY GROVE CHURCH, SUMRALL**, presented him with a plaque honoring his years of service Sept. 14. His wife was also presented a plaque honoring her dedication to their ministry. Walters had pastored Hickory Grove for almost nine years.


**HERE I SEND ME.**

ISAIAH 6:8

JANUARY 25-26, 2015  
BRANDON BAPTIST CHURCH, BRANDON

**2015 STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE**

<p><b>January 25</b> 6:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>January 26</b> Monday Morning 9:15-9:30 a.m. 9:30-9:40 a.m. 9:40-10:25 a.m. 10:25-10:40 a.m. 10:40-11:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.</p> <p>Monday Afternoon 1:30-1:45 p.m. 1:45-2:30 p.m. 2:30-2:45 p.m. 2:45-3:30 p.m. 3:30-3:45 p.m. 3:45-4:30 p.m. 4:30-6:00 p.m.</p> <p>Monday Evening 6:15-6:30 p.m. 6:30-7:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Praise and Worship</b> — Lavon Gray, FBC, Jackson Phil Hoskins, Kingsport, TN</p> <p><b>Praise and Worship</b> — Lavon Gray, FBC, Jackson <b>Welcome</b> Phil Hoskins, Kingsport, TN <b>Praise and Worship</b> — Lavon Gray, FBC, Jackson Jonathan Falwell, Thomas Road BC Lynchburg, VA <b>Break for Lunch (on your own)</b></p> <p><b>Praise and Worship</b> — Lavon Gray, FBC, Jackson Junior Hill, Junior Hill Ministries, Hartselle, AL <b>Praise and Worship</b> — Lavon Gray, FBC, Jackson Tommy Green, FBC, Brandon, FL <b>Praise and Worship</b> — Lavon Gray, FBC, Jackson Jim Futral, Executive Director/Treasurer, MBCB <b>Dinner provided</b></p> <p><b>Praise and Worship</b> — Lavon Gray, FBC, Jackson James Merritt, Cross Pointe Church, Duluth, GA</p>
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**BAPTISTS**

Sponsored by the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board  
Jim Futral, Executive Director/Treasurer  
Don Lum, Director, Evangelism Department

Evangelism Department  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board  
P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530



PMA NRS LEO MP NRS VMAL ZT KSEA

GUMK EVV NRS RSENRSK: ET NRMG

RETN LMKS, ZN TREVV JS LMKS GKNM

NRSS: NRO ASHEAL TREVV ASNGAK

GUMK NRZKS MHK RSEL.

MJELZER MKS: PZPNSSK

Clue: L = D

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Amos 8:12

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

# Undisclosed charges keep Christian in Egyptian jail

ISTANBUL, Turkey (BP) — A noted convert in Egypt who was sentenced to five years in prison for documenting attacks on Christians has won a partial victory on appeal but remains in jail on prior blasphemy charges.

An appeals judge ruled Dec. 28 that Bishop Armia Boulous, known as Mohammed Hegazy until his conversion in 1998, was not guilty on a charge of spreading information meant to "cause harm or damage to the public interest" and not guilty on the related charge of spreading false news "bound to weaken" Egypt's prestige or harm the "country's national interests."

Boulous, however, was found guilty of an unidentified charge and sentenced to one year in prison. The specific article of Egypt's Criminal Code that Boulous allegedly violated was not revealed, but according to the law the judge must do so in sentencing documents to be issued later this month.

Because Boulous, now in his early 30s, spent more than a year in prison waiting for his appeal to be heard, he should have been released at the conclusion of the Dec. 28 hearing but instead was held without an opportunity to post bail stemming from blasphemy charges filed against him in 2009 by two Islamist lawyers.

Attorneys believe the state, in effect, is punishing Boulous for his conversion by holding

him past the charges' statutory limit and doing so without any possibility of bail.

Karam Ghobriel, one of Boulous's attorneys, filed a complaint about the denial of bail for Boulous. By comparison, the incendiary Muslim cleric Abo Islam, who was charged with blasphemy for ripping up and burning a Bible during a 2012 protest in Cairo in front of the U.S. Embassy, was allowed to remain free during his trial and appeal.

The cleric eventually was sentenced to five years in prison. He is the only Muslim in Egypt to be convicted of blaspheming Christianity.

Ghobriel and human rights activists familiar with the case have charged the government with targeting Boulous at the time of his arrest in early December 2013. Internal documents of the Ministry of Interior show that it employs informants to follow converts from Islam. One such informant was following Boulous in Minya when he was arrested.

An official listed as Lt. Amer Hassan reported that "one of our secret sources called and told us that one of the converts, who is called Bishop Armia Boulous, whose previous name was Mohammed Hegazy, is present at the Agricultural Association in Minya, and covering some of the religious violence and persecution of Copts."

Hassen noted "how dangerous the situation is" and was accompanied by another officer to investigate.

Hassen arrested Boulous at a café at the Agricultural Association in Minya, about 160 miles south of Cairo, confiscating a

camera, four flash drives, and a notebook. Officials claimed Boulous was working for The Way TV, a Coptic Christian-owned, U.S.-based television channel that broadcasts into Egypt via satellite, and was contributing to a "false image" that there was violence against Christians in Minya.

Christians in Minya faced a well-documented spree of violence that month, including public kidnappings, assaults and attacks on several church buildings that mobs of militant Muslims burned to the ground.

On the day of his arrest, officials interrogated Boulous along with three women, all of them journalists who, like Boulous, were documenting "sectarian attacks," the interrogation documents state. Unlike Boulous, the other reporters were only questioned and then released.

Ghobriel, the defense attorney, stated that when officials interrogated Boulous they already had a complete dossier on his religious life. The 20-page interrogation report supports Ghobriel's claim, relaying detailed facts about Boulous' conversion at age 16 and his baptism. In all, Boulous' conversion or the earlier blasphemy charges against him were mentioned nine times.

After being held for six months, a judge sentenced Boulous to five years in prison on June 18 of last year and levied a fine of 500 Egyptian pounds (US\$70) for what he called "disturbing the peace by broadcasting false information," a single charge that had replaced the three initial charges for his reporting.



BOULOUS

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

# THE VILLAGE VIEW



**Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director**

P.O. Box 27  
Clinton, MS 39060-0027  
(601) 922-2242

[www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com)

## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

### OCTOBER 2014

#### MEMORIAL

#### CORRECTION:

Launa Givens  
Mr. & Mrs. Barney Albritton

### NOVEMBER 2014

#### HONORS

Joan & Buster Bailey  
Mr. & Mrs. George Smith  
Ann Beck  
Carrollton BC Tues Morn  
Bible Study  
Mrs. Jo Blackwell  
Winsome SSC, Petal-Harvey BC  
Bro. Billy Brumfield  
Lucille Hilderbrand SSC,  
Immanuel BC  
Celia & Cecil Burnham  
Mr. & Mrs. George Smith  
Nancy Clinton  
Mr. & Mrs. Gene D. Saucier  
Vickie Cothran  
Mrs. Mattie Rials  
Susan & Frank Duke  
Mr. & Mrs. George Smith  
Jane & Dean Gerber  
Mr. & Mrs. George Smith  
David Holbrook  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald B. Regel  
Pat Hubbard  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald B. Regel  
Buddy Keyes  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald B. Regel  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph (Jackie) Lee  
Ms. Janice M. Thames  
Ms. Shannon Lee & Boys  
Ms. Janice M. Thames  
Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth McRaney

#### Ms. Betty Rhines

Don & Mary Sue Mitchell  
Mr. & Mrs. George Smith  
Loree Rice  
Dr. & Mrs. Steve Mooneyham  
Mary Jane & Julius Ridgway  
Mr. & Mrs. George Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Branton Riley  
Ms. Betty Rhines  
Bro. Zachary Sanford  
Lucille Hilderbrand SSC,  
Immanuel BC  
Laverne Swindle  
Wade & Lisa Allen  
Mary & Charles Taylor  
Mr. & Mrs. George Smith  
Ms. Jessica Teston  
Ms. Janice M. Thames  
Natalie Watson  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles L. Grant  
Jean & Pat Welsh  
Mr. & Mrs. George Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy (Theresa)  
Williamson  
Ms. Janice M. Thames  
Alabel Wiser  
Mr. & Mrs. George Smith  
Lance Word  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald B. Regel

### NOVEMBER 2014

#### MEMORIALS

Mr. Wayne Alderman  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Dr. Jack Aldridge  
Mr. & Mrs. James W. O'Mara  
Mrs. Margaret Powell Anderson  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Honea  
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Burris  
Mr. & Mrs. Purvis Huff  
Mrs. Wanda A. Milley  
Wayne B. Anderson  
Leroy Bailey  
Harry Lott's SSC, Holcomb BC

Holcomb BC  
Mrs. Inez Baker  
Ms. Lillian C. Rowsey and Family  
Bro. Leo Barker  
Mary Lee Michael  
Kristin Michael  
Mr. Robbie Beckett  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Mrs. Dorothy Jean Bell  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. Heffner  
Mrs. Pauline Bibb  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Billy Wade Bond  
Mrs. Holly Bond  
Linda Box  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Whitten  
Freddie R. Boykin  
Mrs. Ann Spradlin  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Elmo Branch  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry P. Franklin  
Daniel Branton  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan  
Barbara Braswell  
Ms. Marsha S. Burrell  
Ashton Brewer  
Mr. & Mrs. Albert R. Dulaney  
Dr. Jep Brock  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Hensarling  
Mr. James Steven (Jimmy) Brown  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Mr. & Mrs. John F. Miller, Jr.  
Mr. Robert E. Stevens  
Mrs. Ann Spradlin  
Marlene B. Brown  
Mrs. Etheleen J. Blanton  
Twila Frances Brown  
Mr. & Mrs. David T. Huddleston  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Rowland  
Mr. & Mrs. Ronnie Cole  
Mr. Gary M. Franks  
Mr. Steven M. Broom  
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Vanstony  
Betty Bruce  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. Henry Bryant  
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Finkelberg  
Jahazel Buckley  
Mr. Ted Buckley  
Mr. Bubba Buehler  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan  
Mrs. Edna Burrell  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mrs. Mitch Callendar  
Mr. Charles Benton  
Mr. Gary Calvert  
Rev. William B. Webb  
Mr. Greg Campanova  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Mac Campbell  
Mr. John M. Campbell  
Eva Card  
Holcomb BC  
Mrs. Lawanda C. Chandler  
Mr. & Mrs. Terry E. Champion  
Mrs. Becky Coleman  
Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Doty  
Chase Collins  
Mr. & Mrs. Barry Lenard  
Sheryl Collins  
Mr. & Mrs. Jesse R. Johnson  
Mrs. Camille S. Conerly  
Mr. & Mrs. Hiram P. Whittington  
Mr. & Mrs. Joe L. Ferguson  
Mr. & Mrs. Keith Kent  
Mr. & Mrs. Adam McKay  
Mr. & Mrs. Henry W. Darden  
Ms. Fay S. Ray  
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Gress  
Mrs. Doris Poole  
Cornelia Crawford  
Mr. & Mrs. Gene Davis  
Mrs. Doris Crutcher  
Cecil & Penny Washington  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Grace Davis  
Mr. & Mrs. Hubert T. Kendrick  
Mr. & Mrs. V. B. Davis  
Mrs. Mary D. Horton  
Christine Dickson

Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley  
Harmon S. Dickson  
Ms. Linda S. Dickson  
Richard Ducker  
Mr. & Mrs. Ron K. Phillips  
Mrs. Mildred Dugger  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Ms. Nell Rose Dunn  
Mr. & Mrs. James C. Copeland  
Linda Dyess  
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Blair  
Mrs. Christine Ellison  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mike Evans  
Mr. & Mrs. David Cotton Foster  
Nathan Everett  
Arlington Heights BC  
Mrs. Barbara Fleming  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Mickey Fleming  
Ms. Judi T. Beall  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Frazier Sr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Danny Withers  
Jimmy Freeman  
Dr. & Mrs. Jim Brewer  
Josephine V. Frey  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Mrs. Grace Fuller  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Dan Fulton  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Benson  
Gregory Stephen Galloway  
Mr. & Mrs. Vaughn Galloway  
Lynn Giudici  
Mr. & Mrs. Don F. Sherwood  
Dean C. Golden  
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Moss  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Buchanan  
Elouise O'Neal-Goss  
Dean Tucker  
Mr. Larry A. Tucker  
Mrs. Mildred Graves  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Alexander  
Kayla Green  
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur E. Bishop  
Mrs. Corky Greenlee  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan  
Mrs. Katherine Greg  
Mr. & Mrs. Joe James  
Mrs. Gordean Gross  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley  
Walter Guillot IV  
Mrs. C. Gene Cryder  
David M. Guimbellot  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Maria Harbin  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Clovis Harden  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry P. Franklin  
Charlie Harris  
Mr. & Mrs. Jesse R. Johnson  
Mary Hauser  
Residents of Ridgeland Pointe  
Kyle Hayden  
Mr. & Mrs. Morris E. Newton, Jr.  
Elisha Hedden  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Lambert  
Mrs. Bette Bowman Herrington  
BSA Troop 29  
Dr. Jason L. Williams  
Dr. Sarah C. Langston  
The Dental Wellness Group  
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Convention Board  
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Morrow  
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Ms. Lee Ann Mayo  
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Dr. Ed Hewlett  
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Mrs. Reba Holcomb  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Travis Holloway  
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Wendy Champion Hood  
Frances R. Lester  
Jack & Lyn Banks  
Bob & Connie Broedur  
Jan Cochran  
Ed & Linda Dullmann

Norm & Dot Dulude  
Joe & Judy Garrison  
Jim & Mary Guillozet  
Mary Ivic  
Roger & Marianne Jerome  
Agnes Kaye  
Peggie Konchan  
Tom & Made Koscelnik  
Peter & Marge Lagana  
Ben & Dot Lewis  
Jim & Janice McAdams  
Donna Phillips  
Chapin & Bev Pratt  
Dee Robbins  
Joe & Madeline Simon  
Charles & Fran Theisen  
Joe & Rita Thompson  
Dave & Andreen Todnem  
Bob & Jane Troesch  
John & Sally Tsikalas  
Bob & Jan Watkins  
Teresa Wise  
Leone P. Howard  
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Ms. Marie H. Taylor  
Mr. Guy Jones  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Gabe Jordan  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mrs. Suzanne Jordan  
Mrs. Vera Windham  
Mrs. Catherine Kent  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Mr. Rusty King  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan  
Mary S. Kuykendall  
Louise B. Temple Family  
Mr. Rodney Lamb  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Marcus Lane  
Whitesand BC  
Meredith Lee  
Mrs. Shirley Hastings  
Mrs. Julia Linthicum  
Mr. & Mrs. Fred H. Blackledge  
Mr. H. A. (Foxey) Lowery  
FBC Hazlehurst  
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth M. Davis  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Berry  
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Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
John Mangum  
Mrs. Hope Hawkins  
Mrs. Mabel Mann  
Carolyn Johnston & Family  
James Oliver Williamson  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Simm  
Mary Scruggs Williamson  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Simm  
Brian McKee  
Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Mercer  
Brenda McKenzie  
Ms. Jean Ferguson  
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McKnight  
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Glading BC  
Jimmy & JoAnn Carruth  
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Episcopal Parish Mediator  
Redeemer Women  
Celia McKigne  
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Mr. & Mrs. Tony L. Warnock  
Mr. Ray Merritt  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Mrs. Ray Merritt  
Mrs. Judith Scruggs  
Calvin and Edna Miller  
Dr. & Mrs. Theodore C. Miller  
Mrs. Faye Moak  
Huey Moak and Family  
Louie Moak

Janice Phelps  
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Mr. Jasper M. Moore  
Mr. Melvin Moore  
W. C. Morris  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Robert Nail  
The Bill Curtis Family  
Mrs. Dorothy Moore Nettles  
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Paul N Nunnery  
Mr. John W. Cope  
Mrs. Kathy Overstreet  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Joe Waldrup  
J. V. and Mary Katherine Parker  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael W. Parker  
Margaret S. Parkerson  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Glen Pate  
Pheba BC  
Mr. Kenny Pate  
Cecil & Penny Washington  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Mr. & Mrs. Pat W. Denton  
Charles Patterson  
Mr. & Mrs. James T. Garrett  
Mrs. Mary Agnes Patterson  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Barbara Payne  
Mr. & Mrs. Clay Caston  
Dorothy B. Peyton  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Dorothy Bland Peyton  
Mrs. Jeanne K. Hall  
Mrs. Olie Polk  
Mr. & Mrs. James Robbins  
Mr. & Mrs. Russell Nalls  
Mr. & Mrs. Tim Buckley  
Mrs. Margaret Speights  
Bobby Rae Price  
Gleaners SSC, Pilgrim's Rest BC  
Peggy B. Pritchard  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Mrs. Gaither Putnam  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Mary J. Ramsey  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Robert Revere  
The Curtis Family  
Herbert Rhea  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley  
Mr. James "Jim" Rogers  
Dr. & Mrs. Bob Hanvey  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Berry  
Mr. Roscoe Rosamond  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mrs. J. E. Ruffin  
Mrs. Joy B. Roberts  
Ida Salley  
Tennie Ivy, Dale & Elaine Haag  
Mr. Thomas Salley  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Shelley Lynn Sandefur  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert M. Sandefur  
Alton Saucier  
Grumpy Ole Mens SSC, Rawls  
Springs BC  
Joy SSC, Rawls Springs BC  
Mr. & Mrs. John L. Prine  
Philip Schoen  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Jackson  
Bart Schreiner  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Whitten  
Mr. Lloyd Seal  
Mrs. Helen Brown  
Mr. Don Self  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean  
Mr. Bobby Newton Sellers  
Mr. & Mrs. James R. Blair  
Ms. Judy H. Lacy  
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M. M. (Pat) Shackelford  
Mr. & Mrs. R. N. Humphreys  
Joe F. Shepard  
Mrs. June D. Shepard  
Russell Shipp  
Barry, Kim & Ben Lenard  
Ewell Shows  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles E. Grayson  
Martha Sills  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles E. Grayson



# Protect Human Life • Genesis 9:1-7; Psalm 8:4-8; Proverbs 24:10-12; Philippians 2:12-16a

## Introduction

On January 13, 1984, President Reagan issued a proclamation that designated January 22 as the first National Sanctity of Human Life Day. January 22 was a Sunday that year. It had been a Monday when, eleven years earlier, the United States Supreme Court legalized abortion.

Americans have elected pro-choice presidents since Ronald Reagan. Regardless, churches have recognized the sanctity of human life on the third or fourth Sunday in January.

## Genesis 9:1-7

Genesis 3 records the first sin: Adam and Eve defied God in order to "be like God" (3:1-7). What happened next (and everything thereafter) has been a consequence of human beings defying God.

Genesis 4 reports the first homicide: Cain murdered Abel (4:1-8). Confronting a defiant Cain, God divulged, "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground" (4:10, NASB). The Law later explained, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11, NASB; see also Lev. 17:14).

Between Genesis 4 and 9, God destroyed "all flesh in which [was] the breath of life" (6:17, NASB) because "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (6:5, ESV). The land

under feet of flood water resembled the planet before day one of creation: "formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths" (1:2, HCSB).

Genesis 9 thus parallels Genesis 1-2. It features a cluster of commands that promote human life (compare 9:1, 7 to 1:28) and one command with a death penalty (compare 9:5-6 to 2:16-17) that protects human life. The blunt wording, "whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed" (9:6, NASB), stresses "that all men are created equal."

Protecting life requires protecting it. The paramount reason to protect human life is the image of God, that which distinguishes every person (9:6; see also 1:26-27).

## Psalm 8:4-8

Without using the nouns "image" or "likeness," David expressed poetically that human beings are distinct. Verse five literally reads, "You [namely, God] have caused him [namely, man] to lack a little less than God [Hebrew: Elohim]" (See RSV, NASB, and HCSB; also rendered "angels" [KJV], "divine beings" [ESV], or "heavenly beings" [NIV]).

Such a statement may sound like a hyperbole to some, but it is a fitting counter to the environmentalist that undervalues human life. This planet is not more valuable than people; God intended the earth to be inhabited (Is. 45:18). Plants and animals (even endangered species) are not as valuable as people; God appointed human beings to rule them all (8:6-7; see also Gen. 1:28; 9:1, 7).

As the Creator's crowning achievement, every human being is worth saving; why the eternal Son of God became the son of Mary and Joseph (See Lk. 19:10; Jn. 3:16-17; 1 Tim. 1:15; 2:1-7; 1 Jn. 2:1-2).

How God assigns value contrasts how Wall Street or Las Vegas or Hollywood does: "For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). "Outward appearance" indicates more than looks. It encompasses pedigree (one's name), performance (what one can do), and possessions (what one can offer). Based upon outward appearances, the world's population divides into two disparate groups, the favored few and everyone else.

## Proverbs 24:10-12; Philippians 2:12-16a

The obsession with outward appearances has led to worldwide exploitation and, therefore, a staggering number of casualties. Day after day, the vulnerable become victims as a result of human trafficking, prejudice, prostitution, pornography, abuse, and abortion.

In this crooked and perverse generation, God has called us to "Seek justice, improve the ruthless, defend the widow, [and] plead for the orphan" (Is. 1:17). Jesus referred to the vulnerable as "the least" (Mt. 25:31-46, NASB). To Love him entails being their untiring advocates.

## Conclusion

Five years ago, Russell Moore posted the article "Why I Hate Sanctity of Human Life Sunday" on his website "Moore to the Point." He contended, "I hate Sanctity of Human Life Sunday because I'm reminded that we have to say things to one another that human beings shouldn't have to say. Mothers shouldn't kill their children. Fathers shouldn't abandon their babies. No human life is worthless, regardless of skin color, age, disability, [or] economic status. The very fact that these things must be proclaimed is a reminder of the horrors of this present darkness."

Parke is professor, Department of Christian Studies and Philosophy, Mississippi College, and a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

# Ready When Injustice Prevails • Exodus 23:1-3, 6-9

The recent tornadoes which hit our state are a reminder that a crisis can occur at any moment. Within a matter of minutes people were injured or killed, homes and businesses destroyed. Few of us are prepared for a crisis or hard times. Those who work with emergency management are trained and prepared to respond to disasters. For believers in Christ the Bible offers us guidance and life presents us opportunities where we can minister to a person in crisis with love and support. Ready: Ministering Life to Those in Crisis, is the overall theme as we enter into the final six weeks of this quarter.

Our first lesson will focus on how we are to be ready to minister to or defend those who can't defend themselves. How many times have we thought or said, "This is not fair"? We want justice, the wrong made right, but the truth is—there is the reality of injustice. The word "injustice" means a lack of fairness or justice (merriam-webster.com). Today's lesson presents the question: are we willing to step up when the injustice is not about us but against someone else. God calls us to be His champions for justice.

First, let's go back a few chapters in the book of Exodus for the setting of the focal passage. The children of Israel have left Egyptian slavery and made it safely across the Red Sea. In chapter 19 God established a covenant with them to be His

special possession. The Ten Commandments, God's laws, are presented in Exodus 20 and for the next several chapters civil laws are presented.

Exodus 23:1-3 is a warning to Israel and us against acting to pervert justice by being a false witness. "In a contemporary setting this law could be applied to the way jurors or legislators vote—they should vote their conviction, based on God's standard of righteousness and justice, even when standing alone against others willing to pervert justice."<sup>1</sup>

No matter what the time period, God has commanded and we are called to exercise justice in our dealings with others. Micah 6:8 states, "Mankind, He has told you what is good and what it is the LORD requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God" (HSCB). Furthermore there is to be no favoritism between the poor or the rich (Dt. 16:19; Rom. 2:11; James 2:9). We are to keep our focus on God's standard for justice rather than the justice of the American courts. A good

definition of biblical justice is: treating all people with fairness and dignity.

Verse 6 is a stiff warning not to take advantage of the poor in a lawsuit; to do so is a perversion to justice. Then in verse 7 we read, "Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked." The innocent are the unborn, elderly, or disabled. The righteous are the Christians. Today, throughout the Southern Baptist Convention we recognize the

wrongdoing, unjustly punishing or sentencing an innocent person, or in being paid to lie, cover up sin, or fail to tell the truth" (Ex. 23:7-8).<sup>2</sup> The final verse references back to the children of Israel in the land of Egypt. They were to remember what that experience felt like and to use that experience when dealing with foreigners in their country. They were not to oppress but to minister love and grace.

Warren Wiersbe writes, "Justice is the practical outworking of the righteousness of God in human history, for 'the Lord loves righteousness and justice' (Ps. 33:5; see Isa 30:18; 61:8). There may be a great deal of injustice in our world today, but the time will come when God will judge the world in righteousness by the Savior that the world has rejected, and His judgment will be just (Acts 17:31)."

Daily Dwelling on God's Word: Proverbs 28:3

<sup>1</sup> Women's Evangelical Commentary: Old Testament by Dorothy Patterson and Rhonda Kelley, ©2011.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

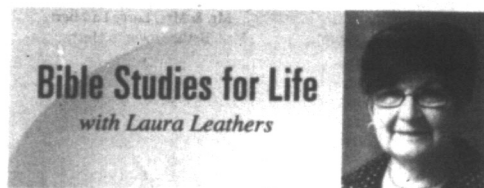
<sup>3</sup> Google eBook, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament, Exodus, ©2007, page 184.

Leathers is a member of First Church, Madison.



## Explore the Bible

with Ivan Parke



## Bible Studies for Life

with Laura Leathers

abled is Joni Eareckson Tada and her organization, Joni and Friends International Disability Center. Both are examples of people being called by God to promote justice and bring awareness of the injustice.

"You must not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and corrupts the words of the righteous" (vs. 8). "People called by God's name should never participate in falsely accusing someone of

# CP in positive territory with So. Baptist pastors

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — Southern Baptist pastors are strongly supportive of the Cooperative Program (CP), according to a study commissioned by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee in Nashville and published in its Winter 2014/2015 edition of SBC LIFE magazine.

The survey shows a continuing increase in confidence among pastors that the Cooperative Program supports ministries and missions valued by their churches — moving up to 81% from 73% in a 2012 survey that asked the same questions of pastors, and from 71% in a 2008 survey that included pastors, laypersons, and other church staff.

The study also indicates that pastors' support for the Cooperative Program does have its limits. Sixty-five percent agree that the strategies of SBC entities receiving Cooperative Program dollars are moving in an appropriate direction, though 13% say the strategies are not. Asked whether the entities are using Cooperative Program support effectively, 63% say they are and 13% say they are not.

"This is encouraging news," Ashley Clayton, Executive Committee vice president for Cooperative Program, said of the survey conducted by mail and online during the spring of 2014.



CLAYTON

"A few years ago, a Florida pastor told me the Cooperative Program would have to compete for his church's missions dollars. More recently, he told me, 'Count me in' in support of the CP." The pastor's confidence in CP increased as he watched what he called a "renewed focus" by SBC entities responding to "the values his church embraces," Clayton said. "I believe this report shows that he is not alone."

"However, the survey also shows we still have a way to go to earn the trust of all our pastors," Clayton said.

## CP allocations

Southern Baptist pastors also indicated they generally agree with the current allocation of national Cooperative Program funds for the entities that receive CP funding — the International Mission Board (IMB), North American Mission Board (NAMB), six SBC seminaries, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), and SBC operating budget.

While 15% selected the current distribution percentages as their preference, just over half listed higher percentages for NAMB, ERLC, and the SBC operating budget, while nearly half listed slightly lower percentages for IMB and the six SBC seminaries.

"This is the third survey of pastors the Executive Committee has commissioned since 2007,"

Clayton said. "We continue to see strong pastor support for the current allocation of the SBC portion of CP funds. In all three surveys, pastors indicated their agreement that IMB should receive about 50% of the SBC CP allocation budget, our seminaries should receive slightly less, with the difference distributed to small increases for NAMB and ERLC," Clayton said.

A large majority of pastors have affirmed the statement, "The Cooperative Program supports missions and ministries that my church values," in all three surveys, he said.

Seventy-seven percent agreed with the statement, "The SBC allocation budget places a high priority on penetrating lostness both locally and worldwide."

## Ministry priorities

Pastors also were asked to indicate the priority their churches place on 12 missions and ministry efforts funded by the Cooperative Program. "Sending and supporting overseas missionaries to reach unreached people groups around the world" continues to be their highest priority. It is the only ministry selected by more than 70 percent of pastors as "essential" or a "high priority" (71%), up three percentage points from the 2012 survey.

It is the only ministry effort that fewer than 10% of pastors rated a "low priority" (six percent) or "not a priority" (two percent).

The most notable change was reflected in pastors' desire for the SBC to provide "a Christian perspective and response about social, ethical, and public policy issues" (54% selecting it as "essential" or "high priority," up from only 37% in 2012).

Following is the percentage of SBC pastors who rated each CP-funded mission and ministry as "essential" or "high priority":

**70% range**  
■ Sending and supporting overseas missionaries, 71% (68% in 2012)

**60% range**  
■ Engaging in local ministry projects for evangelism, 66% (65% in 2012)

■ Developing and implementing an evangelism strategy for penetrating lostness in North America, 63% (59% in 2012)

■ Improving the vitality and health of existing churches, 62% (59% in 2012)

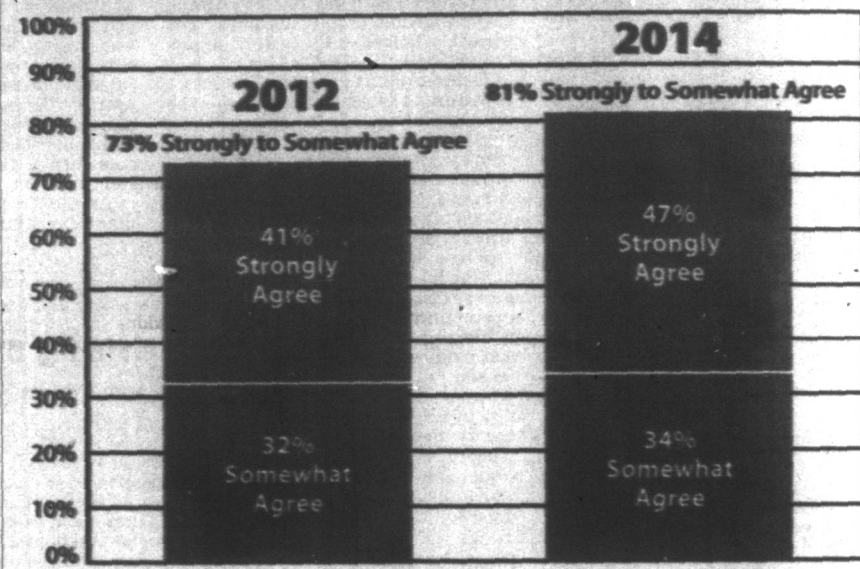
**50% range**  
■ Educating and training future pastors, missionaries, church planters, and other denominational leaders, 57% (57% in 2012)

■ Providing a Christian perspective and response about social, ethical, and public policy issues, 54% (37% in 2012)

■ Reaching ethnically and culturally diverse people, 52% (51% in 2012)

■ Promoting an ongoing program of missions education for all ages, 51% (48% in 2012)

The Cooperative Program supports SBC ministries and missions that my church values.



■ Conducting an ongoing program of leadership development, 50% (45% in 2012)

**40% range**  
■ Engaging in direct international missions, 48% (45% in 2012)

■ Intentional church planting in cities and towns across North America, 44% (44% in 2012)

■ Intentional church planting in large urban centers, 43% (43% in 2012)

"While international missions remains the highest priority for the Cooperative Program, pastors also place a high priority on participating in local ministry projects for evangelism, developing and implementing an evangelism strategy for penetrating lostness in North America, and improving the vitality and health of existing churches," Clayton said.

"It is not a case of either/or," he said. "Pastors see value in both — supporting an aggressive global vision while simultaneously strengthening a strong home base."

## Differences

Significant statistical differences emerged among pastors based on location, age, and church size. Pastors in the Northeast are more likely to select "reaching ethnically and culturally diverse people in large cities across North America" as "essential" (27%) compared to churches in the South (17%) and the Midwest (11%).

Younger pastors, age 18–44, are more likely to view "sending and supporting overseas missionaries to reach unreached people groups" as "essential" (38%) than pastors 65 and older (29%).

Pastors in the West (24%) and

Northeast (28%) are more likely to view "intentional church planting in cities and towns across North America" as "essential" than pastors in the South (15%) and Midwest (11%).

Pastors of churches running 0–49 and 100–249 are more likely to select "improving the health and vitality of existing churches" as "essential" (32% and 30% respectively) than churches running 250 or more (19%). Older pastors, 65 and up, view this as a "high priority" (37%) or "essential" (24%).

Younger pastors (age 18–44) and older pastors (age 65 and over) are more likely to "strongly agree" that "the SBC entities supported by the Cooperative Program are moving in the appropriate direction with the strategies they have in place" (30% and 31% respectively) than pastors age 45–54 (20%).

In regard to educating and training future pastors, missionaries, church planters, and SBC leaders, younger pastors, age 18–44, are more likely to say it is "essential" (33%) compared to pastors age 55–64 (25%) and age 65 and up (23%).

When asked about engaging in direct international missions projects, differences mainly emerged according to church size. Churches with 250 or more in attendance are the most likely to say it is "essential" (31%), while churches running 50–99 and 100–249 are more likely to select "medium priority" (24% and 33% respectively).

In perhaps the most telling generational difference, only one percent of younger pastors "strongly agree" that the Cooperative Program supports SBC ministries and missions that my church values, although another 36% "somewhat agree." On the

other hand, 53% of pastors 65 and up "strongly agree" with the statement, with another 26% "somewhat agreeing."

## Gifts through CP

The Executive Committee also asked pastors about the decision their churches made regarding contributions through the Cooperative Program in the most recent budget process. The vast majority of churches (80%) decided to keep their CP giving the same as the previous year. Three times as many churches raised their CP contribution (12%) as decreased it (four percent). Three percent said their church does not contribute through the CP.

Of churches making a change in their giving through the Cooperative Program (nearly 20% of the churches surveyed), 5.6% increased it by more than two percentage points of the church's undesignated receipts, with another nine percent increasing their CP contributions from 0.1 percent to 1.9 percentage points of their budget.

On the other hand, 4.8% of churches decreased their contribution through the CP.

The final question on the survey referred to the "1% CP Challenge," an effort by the SBC Executive Committee to encourage all Southern Baptist churches to raise their Cooperative Program contributions by one percentage point of their church's undesignated contributions. Twenty-eight percent of pastors had not heard of the "1% CP Challenge." Forty-nine percent said they have not accepted the challenge. Eight percent of pastors said their church had accepted the "1% CP Challenge" and another nine percent plan to do so in the next budget year.